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He stared at her. He swept his hand across his eyes. She seemed—chs seemed to be slipping away from him—beyond—beyond his reach.

"You said you knew him—but you do not know him. He is the head and front and brains of a gang of crooks. I know! He held me a prisoner in their dirty lair, a hidden place, a cell ar over in the slums—like rats they were. He is a criminal, and a dangerous one—while he masquerades with his medicine. God alone knows the crimes, if there are any, that he has not committed. He is a foul, unclean and filthy thing, debauched and dissolute, a moral leper. Claire, do you understand. Ten minutes after using Danderine

"Claire," John Bruce said in a low voice, "the night I left your house you said that, rather than regretting your promise to marry Crang, you had come to be glad you had made it. Can you still say that?"

She lifted her face now, tear-stained.

the brown cyes strangely radiant through the wet lashes.

"Yes," she said. "I am glad. So glad—because I know now that it was worth it all so many, many times over."

"Claire"—his voice was lower still—"I left your house that night, angry, isalous misindeling was because you

She stared at him in a startled way.
"What—what do you mean?" she

And now John Bruce's face was

John Bruce had both her hands im-

"Yes; I know!" He laughed with a

strange buoyancy; passion, triumph, were vibrant in his voice. "Did Crang were vibrant in his voice. "Did Crang not tell you how near to death he came

today? I cheked the truth out of him. Yes; I know! I know that it was to

save my life you made that promise, that you sold everything you held dear

two hands to draw her arms around his

pounding in mad abandon through his veins. His soul itself seemed affame.
Closer, closer he drew her to him.
"Must not! There is only you and me
and our love—on all the carth."

But still she struggled-and then sud-

: and kissed the tear-wet eyes; and

and her hand, lifting, found his face and

touched it gently, and creeping upward, brushed the hair back from his fore-head—and then suddenly she clung to him with all her strength and drew his

And there was no world about them,

and time was non-existent, and only It was Claire at last who put his arms

It was Claire at last who put his arms from her in a wistful, lingering way "We have been mad for a little while," she whispered. "Take me back home, John—and—and you must never try to see me again."

And something seemed to grow chill and cold within John Bruce's heart, "Not that, Claire!" he cried out. "You do not mean that—that, after this, you will go on with—with tomorrow morning!"

this, you will go on what
row morning."

A brave little effort at a smile quivered on her lips.

"We have had our hour, John," she
said: "yours and mine. It can never
be taken from us, and I shall live in it
all my life; but it is over now. Yes;
I shall go through with it tomorrow
morning. There is no other way. I
must keep my promise."

must keep my promise."
"No!" he cried out again. "It shall

never be! Claire, you cannot mean what you are saying! A promise like that! It was forced upon you inhumanir, horribly. He would have mur-

dered me "
"But tonight you are nlive," she an-

swered quietly.
"Alive! Yes!" he said flercely. "I

"Alive! Yes!" he said flercely. "I am alive, and—"
"It is because you are alive that I promised," she broke in gently. "He kept his word. I cannot break mine." "Alive!" John Bruce laughed now in sudden, bitter agony. "Alive—yes! And do you think that I can walk about the street, and talk, and smile, and suck the honey out of life, while you have paid for it with a tertured soul? "Claire, you shall not! That man is— No, wait! There is mysef. He called me a sulveling hypocrite. You

called me a suiveling hypocrite. You shall know the worst of me before you know the worst of him. There is not

know the worst of him. There is not much to tell—because he has told you. I am a gambler. All my life I've gambled. As far back as I can remember I've been a rolling stone. My 'ife has been useless, uterly worthless. But I was never ashamed of it; I never saw

any reason to be ashamed until you came into my life. It hasn't been the

same since then—and it will never be the same again. You have given me something to live for now, Claire."

She shook her head.

She shook her head.

"You do not argue well." she said softly. "If I have brought this to you, John, I am glad—so glad for this. too. Oh, I cannot tell you how glad I am, for, because I loved you, the knowledge of what your life was hurt me. But I had faith in you, John, as I always shall have. So don't you see"—the brave little smile came again—"they this is a reward, something tan-

the brave little smile came again-that this is a reward, something tan-

gible and great, to make still more worth while the promise that I made?' He stared at her. He swept his hand

head down until her lips met his.

hat spoke.

An Unusual Romance of People Whose Very Being Is Pledged to Do the Bidding of Others By FRANK L. PACKARD Author of "The Miracle Man," "From Now On," etc.



dead," said the old cab driver brokenly. John Bruce made no answer

pealous, misjudging you because you within his had said that. You asked for forgiveness a minute ago when there was nothing to forgive: I asked for forgiveness from you after that night, but even then I did not know how far beyond the right to forgiveness I had He fe't

C'aire!" he cried passionately. "It was not fair, perhaps, but I am past all that now—and you would not have confessed it in any other way. Glad: I was a stranger that night when you bought my life—and tonight you are glad, not because my life is now or ever could be worth such a sacrifice as yours, but because love has come to make you think so, sweetheart, and you care—

Will not seembered that was the slips was the get Crang away again like this after—in their sockets; the lines were hard, without softness; the skin was tightly drawn across the checkbones, and was colorless.

And he stared at the face, stared for finality in her face and eyes that answered, before it was uttered, the question that stumbled on his lips.

"Claire! Chaire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire! he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire! he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire! he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire! he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

"Claire! he pleaded wildy.

"Claire!" he pleaded wildy.

think so, sweetheart, and you care—
you care for me."
"You know!" Her face was deathly white. "You know about—about that night." she faltered.

John Bruce had both her head in

"No." she whispered. "Be merciful, John-my strength is almost gone."
And there was something in her voice that held him from the act. The car stopped.

And then, as the door was opened and she stood up, suddenly she leaned swiftly forward and pressed her lips to n life for me-but it is over now!"

He was beside her. He raised her

John Bruce groped his way out of the

car. Across the sidewalk the door of Paul Veniza's house closed. Hawkins, She struggled back.
"No. no." she cried wildly. "Oh,
you must not." His voice rang his
challenge to the world. The blood was standing by the car door, clutched at his arm. And Hawkins' hand was trembling violently. Slowly his eyes met Hawkins' He shook his head. The old lined face seemed to gray even

in the murky light of a distant street lamp. "I'd ruther see her dead," said the old cab driver brokenly.

John Bruce made no answer.

But still she strong.

denly the tears came.

"Oh, you are so strong—so strong."
she sobbed—and like some weary child
she sobbed—and like some weary child
she sobbed—has been dropped upon his

"I—where'il I drive you?"
John Bruce started blindly on past

Hawkins down the street. "Nowhere," he said. "Claire! Claire!" It was his soul

## CHAPTER XXII

He kissed the silken hair, and fondled Through the Night his cheek lay against hers; and she was in his arms, and he held her there tight-A gaunt and haggard figure stalked through the night; around him only shuttered windows, darkened houses, clasped so that she might never go and deserted streets. And after a time she sobbed no more; rang hollow to the impact of his boot-

as he smiled and the face in the mirror smiled with him in a distorted movement of the lips, he swept his hand
across his eyes.

"He was going to kill Crang.
"He was going to kill Crang. across his eyes.
"John Bruce," he said.

Chaire's. It was the life of an unclean thing that mocked and desecrated all decency, that flung its sordid challenge at every law, both human and divine-or the life of a pure, clean soul made the plaything of this beast, and drag-ged into a mire of unutterable abomi-nation to suffocate and strangle in its

went. But slways he walked; walked incessantly, without pause, hurrying—nowhere.

There was a raw, biting chill in the sense of sight, the ability to stretch out torment of a far greater and fuller appreciation of the price than he, he knew, though it turned his soul sick within him, could ever have.

And suddenly he covered his face with his lands.

"Or him!" he said, "Or him!"

And nation to suffocate and strangle in its notions surroundings and die.

And that soul was in jeopardy because at this moment he, John Bruce, had the power of movement in his limbs, the sense of sight, the ability to stretch out his hand and feel it touch that lamppost there, and, if he would, to speak aloud and designate that object for what it was—a lamp-post. She had bought him these things with her life. Should she die—and he life.

knew, though it turned his soul sick within him, could ever have.

And suddenly he covered his face with his hands.

"Or him!" he said. "Or him!" his hands.

"Bought!" he said brokenly in his agony. "Oh, my God, this has bought me!"

He fe't his hands drawn away, and her two palms laid upon his cheeks. He looked at her. How white she was!

"Help me. John." she said steadily. "Don't—don't make it harder."

She reached out and touched the bell button beside the seat. In a subcon scious way he remembered that was the signal for Hawkins to bring the tray-cling pawnshop to the end of its circuit around the block in its oldtime trips drawn across the cheekbones, and was a hoarse and he live?

On: Always on! There was no rest. It was ceaseless. The gray came into the East.

And then at last the figure halted.

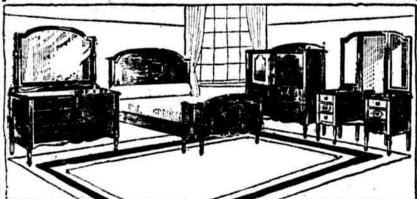
There was a large window with wire grating, and a light burned within. In the window was a plate mirror, and a timepiece. It was 5 o'clock. He looked at the timepiece. It was 5 o'clock. He looked at the mirror. It reflected the face of a young man grown old. The eyes burned deep in their sockets; the lines were hard, without softness; the skin was tightly drawn across the cheekbones, and was this morning, in a few hours, that they be demand a designate that bought it was—a lamp-post. She had bought it was—a lamp-post. She had bought him these things with her life. Should and he live?

And he remembered back through the came into the said stendily. There was no rest. It was a large window with wire grating, and a light burned within. In the window was a plate mirror, and a light burned within. In the window was a plate mirror, and a light burned within. In the window was constituted.

There was enough, more than enough now with the evidence of Crang's double the said. There was enough, more than enough of human life, how it had sought the sould was—a lamp-post. She haid bought it was—a lamp-post. She haid bought the sould was—a lamp-post. She haid bought the sould was—a lamp-post. She haid bought the sould was—a

It seemed to arouse him from some mental absorption in which his physical entity had been lost. It was 5 o'clock, and he was John Bruce. At 11 o'clock He had no thought of his future or his or was it 12?—last night he had left
Hawkins standing by the door of the
traveling pawnshop, and since then—
He had no thought of his tuttle of his
safety. That was already settled. With
his decision was irrevocably coupled the
forfeiting of his own life. Not his own
life! It belonged to Claire. Claire

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where downtown. He did not know where. He began to walk in an uptown direction.

Something had been born in those hours. Something cataclysmic. What was it?

"Or him!" The words came again—
loud—without apparant volition.

was it?

"Or him!" The words came again—aloud—without apparent volition.

What did that mean? It had something to do with Hawkins; with what Hawkins had said, etanding there by the traveling pawnshop. What was the traveling pawnshop. What was the Hawkins had said? Yes; he remembered: "I'd rather see her dead."

"Or him!"

He was going to kill Crang.

"Or him!"

He was going to kill Crang.

The decision was absolute; it was shall something elso—that bond. He was consider now. There was Larmon what hours unrolled themselves before him. ""Or him!"

He was going to kill Crang.

The decision was absolute; it was shall seed to not be the wast consider now. There was Larmon what hours of mental strife, of torment through which he had just passed, were as the memory of some rack upon which his soul had been put to torture. They came back vividly now, those hours—every minute of them a living eternity. His soul had shrunk back aghast at first, and called it murder; but it was not murder, or, if it was, it was imperative. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's. It was the life of a foul viper—or Claire's life of a foul viper—or Claire's life the waste of the travel decision was going to do first, there were other things' that he was better! But there wa

John Bruce smiled gravely. The bond would be broken in any case. Faustus was at the end of the play. A few months in prison, the electric chair—how apt had been his whistling of that aria in his youth! Youth! Yes, he was old now; he had been young that night on the beach at Apis.

He took off his hat and let the sharp air sweep his head. He was not thinking clearly. All this did not express what he meant. There was Larmon's safety. He must take care of that; see to it, first of all, that Larmon could

to it, first of all, that Larmon could

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not be implicated, held by law as an accomplice through foreknowledge of what was to happen; then, almost of as great importance for Larmon's sake and future, the intimacy between them, their business relations of the past, must never be subjected to the probe of the trial that was to come.

To be continued to the property of the past, and worthlesses of the past, and wish to evade it, or temporise of it, or seek to palliate it. He knew on a vain and bitter regret; knew only desire now at the end, in so far as could, to face death a changed man.



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